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HALMSTAD, SECURITY HEALTH PLAN HONORED AS “COMMUNITIES CHAMPIONS”

Story by Bob Brown, editor of The CVPost

Eau Claire, WI – May 1st, 2015- Zach Halmstad and Security Health Plan were honored Thursday (April 30) as “Communities Champions” for their efforts to make Eau Claire County a healthier place in which to live.

Eau Claire’s Healthy Communities coalition announced the awards during its “Annual Celebration” held at Chippewa Valley Technical College.



Halmstad, co-founder of JAMF Software, was chosen as the second Communities Champion in the category for individuals. The first such award was presented last year to Ned Noel, Eau Claire’s associate city planner.

Halmstad was nominated for the award by Crispin Pierce, an associate professor in the Environmental Public Health Program at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and a member of the Healthy Communities coalition.

In his nomination, Pierce lauded Halmstad for “making extraordinary contributions to the health of Eau Claire by building according to ‘smart growth’ principles.”

“His choice to construct the new JAMF Software building in our town’s center despite the increased cost associated with this choice supports shorter commutes; better connections between jobs, recreation and housing; and community development, where people get to know each other and feel safer in our town,” Pierce wrote.

By building his company’s new Eau Claire offices adjacent to Phoenix Park, Pierce said, “Mr. Halmstad is showing leadership in putting forth and investing in the substantial research that finds that centrally-designed ‘smart growth’ communities provide more connections between residents, improving mental health.

“These communities promote walking and biking, with less car travel, leading to lower rates of cardiovascular disease,” Pierce added. “Family-friendly areas are supported by Mr. Halmstad’s building construction as the downtown area becomes revitalized. This leads to stronger connections between citizens and opportunities for family activities, reducing the rate of family violence.”

SecurityHealthPlan.

Security Health Plan was chosen to receive Healthy Communities’ first Communities Champion Award presented in a new category for organizations.

“We really want to recognize that there are big entities putting forth a lot of effort and saying that health is important,” Gina Schemenauer, community health educator with the Eau Claire City-County Health Department, said in explaining the creation of the new award category. “Everybody’s doing such great work, and they need to be recognized in the community.”

Security Health Plan, a part of the Marshfield Clinic Health System, provides health-insurance coverage to more than 230,000 Wisconsin residents through a variety of plans for employer groups, families and individuals. It began in 1971 as the Greater Marshfield Community Health Plan, the first health-maintenance organization in Wisconsin, with the conversion to its current name coming in 1986.

According to Healthy Communities officials, Security Health Plan is being honored for understanding that the provision of good health care “extends beyond the reach of traditional medicine.” Those nominating the HMO praised it for consistently recognizing the many social, economic, behavioral and environmental factors that impact the health of its members.

According to the HMO’s nomination application, “Security Health Plan of Wisconsin reinforced its commitment to improving the health, lifestyles and overall well-being of (its) members and the communities it serves by making a significant investment in community programs and collaborations across (its) 41-county service area, including Eau Claire County. Security Health Plan strongly believes in the value of partnerships in improving the health and well-being of our communities.”

Healthy Communities is a broad-based coalition that promotes the health and well-being of individuals, families, and communities of Eau Claire County through collaborative and focused action.”

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